



PRESS RELEASE
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Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman Announces Important New Tools for Schools to Protect Students

DENVER, CO —Today Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman announced the release of two new critical tools to assist schools in better protecting students. The first tool is the comprehensive [*Colorado School Safety Guide*](#), which was researched and written by Sarah Goodrum, Ph.D., Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Northern Colorado, and William Woodward, M.P.A., Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado Boulder. The Guide was created as part of the Safe Communities Safe Schools initiative of the Office of the Attorney General, in an effort to provide parents, schools and districts with comprehensive information on steps for promoting school safety.

The guide identifies five components of school safety planning, including: Prevention and Assessment, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery. The goal is for schools and communities to rely on available high-quality evidence-based programs, when possible, and to have information on “best practices,” for issues where no research currently exists.

“From threat to action, from risk to reality, our state and nation are experiencing an unprecedented rise in school-related violence,” said Attorney General Coffman. “Those who work in school safety shoulder a tremendous load whether it is counseling students through crisis, participating in threat assessments, coordinating lockdown drills, intervening to prevent a planned school attack, or supporting parents struggling to raise healthy children in a stress-filled environment. The *Colorado School Safety Guide* is offered in response to the need for more resources to

support their work. It's my hope that the practical safety tools and resources gathered here, along with information on best practices and evidence-based programs, will help better protect kids in our state.”

School safety is a cooperative endeavor, which requires the participation of school and district officials, emergency responders, teachers (who are often the first responders in a crisis), mental health providers, parents, and students. Knowing the plan and practicing the plan for a potential crisis can help everyone remain calm, execute their role, and behave as safely and efficiently as possible. A thoughtful plan and practice preparations can create a more effective response and a more functional recovery and restoration. The Guide seeks to connect a standard of care for physical security with the culture and climate in schools.

“The *Colorado School Safety Guide* came together thanks to the visionary leadership of the Attorney General’s Office and the collaborative efforts of school safety experts from across the state. We are honored to have been part of the process. We are truly grateful to the contributors for taking time to review and provide detailed feedback on the early and final versions of the guide. In the end, the guide represents a practitioner-informed and evidence-based comprehensive approach to school safety, and we are hopeful that it will help school officials enhance the important safety-related work already underway in their schools and communities,” said Goodrum and Woodward.

The second tool the Attorney General’s Office released today is an educational video from the Attorney General with special guest, former Columbine High School principal Frank DeAngelis, discussing the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The [video](#) is focused on the critical importance of information sharing between schools and law enforcement to protect students and staff from school violence. The video also works to clear up some of the confusion over the laws around information sharing, and dispel some of the misconceptions about FERPA and what it does or does not permit schools to do when proactively responding to safety concerns, including threats of school violence.

“In order to create a safe learning environment and prevent school-related violence, we know that schools and districts, their law enforcement partners, social services agencies, mental health providers, and the judicial system all need to share information with each other to keep kids safe,” said Attorney General Coffman. “I hope that this video will empower and encourage schools and districts to adopt policies that avoid well-intentioned but overly restrictive guidance on information sharing.”

The Attorney General's Office oversees the statewide Safe2Tell program. Safe2Tell is a very successful and effective anonymous bystander reporting program where any concerned individual can make a report by phone, on the computer or via the mobile application when they fear for their safety or the safety of others, in schools or in communities.

For more information about the Safe2Tell program go to <https://safe2tell.org/>

For a copy of the Colorado School Safety Guide, go to:

https://coag.gov/sites/default/files/coloradoag_schoolsafetyguide_final_electronic.pdf

To see the FERPA video, go to: <https://coag.gov/OCE/foster-school-safety/FERPA>

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